

CD 2002--141/142

FACULTY *of* MUSIC



2002—2003

WHERE GREAT MUSIC MEETS GREAT MINDS

Friday, October 18, 2002
8 pm. MacMillan Theatre

Faculty of Music
Presents

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Raffi Armenian, conductor

PROGRAMME

Zoltán Kodály
1882–1967

Dances of Galánta

W. A. Mozart
1756–1791

Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K.622

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo: Allegro

Przemyslaw Raczynski, clarinet

INTERMISSION

Paul Creston
1906–1985

Concertino for Marimba, Op. 21

Vigorous

Calm

Lively

Devon Fornelli, marimba

Zoltán Kodály
1882–1967

Háry János Suite

• Prelude. The fairy tale begins

Viennese musical clock

Song

The battle and defeat of Napoleon

Intermezzo

Entrance of the Emperor and his court

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Programme Notes

Dances of Galánta

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

Born in Kecskemét, Hungary, 1882

Died in Budapest, 1967

Kodály biographer Percy Young has described the town of Galánta, where the young Zoltán spent his boyhood, as "a rather dreary place." Located on a railway line between Vienna and Budapest, this town changed hands several times in the 20th century, due to shifts in the border between Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Today it is in the Republic of Slovakia. In 1885, when the Kodály family moved to Galánta – Zoltán was three at the time – its population was a mixture of Hungarians, Slovaks and Germans. And it was to this town that he returned as a young man, to begin his research into folk music, collecting 150 local musical examples there in the year 1905. (His collection of folk material was ultimately to comprise some 4,000 songs and melodies.)

His childhood home also became the inspiration for a piano/orchestral work when he discovered an old collection of folk-melodies published in the year 1800, "after several Gypsies of Galánta." The material contained in this collection became the basis for his *Dances of Galánta*, composed in 1933 in honour of the Budapest Philharmonic's 80th anniversary.

The piece is in one movement, but it is actually a suite, subdivided into seven main sections of varying tempo and metre. Throughout, the work has a distinctively Eastern European flavour, making use of "exotic" scales and melodies played in parallel fifths. In its orchestral form, it is a colourful composition, in which solos for wind instruments – such as the clarinet flourish

that appears near the beginning, recurring towards the end of the piece – alternate with full *tutti* sections. Accompaniment figuration is simple, as befits folk-like dance music.

In 1966, in a lecture given at the University of Toronto (yes, Kodály was here), the composer said, "The natural life of the village people, flourishing as was up to the First World War, was always accompanied by music and dance. Little children, as soon as they began to speak – or even before – warbled their ditties, learned or distorted from their seniors."

The folk music of his childhood – whether quoted literally or imitated stylistically – was, throughout his life, an ever-present influence in the works of Kodály.

Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born in Salzburg, Austria, 1756

Died in Vienna, 1791

"I had . . . black coffee, enjoyed a marvelous pipe of tobacco; then I orchestrated almost the whole Rondo for Stadler . . ."

Unfortunately, these were the only words Mozart ever wrote about his *Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622*. Shortly after he wrote this offhand little remark – contained in a letter of October 7, 1791, to his wife – Mozart completed the piece. And when he passed away in December of that year, the concerto took on a special significance as his last completed instrumental work.

Mozart's earliest written words about the clarinet date from 1778, when as a young man he heard the instruments in the court orchestra of Mannheim. "Ah, if only we had clarinets [in Salzburg]," he

wrote to his father. "You wouldn't believe the wonderful effect a symphony makes with flutes, oboes and clarinets."

In Vienna (where he took up residence in 1781) Mozart came to know Anton Stadler, a clarinetist in the Imperial Wind Band and, like Mozart, a Freemason. Certainly they were acquainted with each other by 1784, as it is known that Stadler took part in a performance of Mozart's *Wind Serenade*, K. 361 in March of that year. The fruits of this musical friendship were two of Mozart's finest works featuring a solo wind instrument: the *Clarinet Quintet in A*, K. 581, and the concerto on tonight's programme – both of which were written for Stadler.

All this is clear enough, but there is also a mystery attached to Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto*. The piece was actually written for a "basset clarinet," an instrument invented by Stadler that extended the range of the clarinet from E down to C. But as Mozart's autographed score for the concerto is lost (except for a draft of the first movement, in the key of G) and the first published edition was arranged for the A clarinet, we do not know exactly what Mozart wrote for this basset clarinet (although attempts have been made to reconstruct both Mozart's original score and Stadler's instrument).

Despite the "inauthenticity" of the work's adaptation for standard clarinet, the piece stands as a brilliant example of Mozart's mature style. A lyrical, transparent three-movement work with only short cadenza passages, it avoids meretricious display in favour of formal balance and elegance of line. Today it is the most popular concerto in the clarinet repertoire – there is even a recording of it by the swing-band leader Benny Goodman.

Concertino for Marimba, Op. 21

PAUL CRESTON

Born in New York, 1906

Died in San Diego, 1985

Paul Creston was not always "Paul Creston" – he was born Giuseppe Guttovoggio, into a working-class immigrant family in 1906. ("Creston" was derived from the name of character he once portrayed in an amateur play – and he legally changed his name to Paul Creston in 1944. He was also known to call himself "Paul Wedge.") After leaving high school in his teens to earn a living as a theatre organist, he taught himself composition by studying the canon of classical music, while also pursuing literary interests. He did not choose to pursue composition as a career until 1932, and the publication of his piano work *Seven Theses* the next year foreshadowed success in his chosen profession.

He received his first Guggenheim Fellowship in 1938, and in 1943 he rose to national prominence with the premiere of his *Symphony No. 1* by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. Like many 20th century composers, he was also a teacher: at 14 US colleges, including Swarthmore, the New York College of Music and Central Washington State College; and he served as president of the National Association for American Composers and Conductors. He also authored two musical treatises: *Principles of Rhythm* (1964) and *Rational Metric Notation* (1979).

Creston's *Concertino for Marimba* Op. 21, dated 1940, was premiered by percussionist Ruth Stuber, who performed it with the conductor Frederique Petrides and her Orchestrette Classique women's orchestra at Carnegie Hall. It is an excellent example the composer's rhythmically boisterous style; notated without recourse to a key signature, it is nonetheless a tonal work, in a traditional

fast/slow/fast three-movement form. Idiomatic scales and arpeggios are prominent in the outer movements, and the calm central movement features chorale-like chords that require four mallets. (An alternate version of this piece, scored for marimba and concert band, also exists.)

During his lifetime, he composed more than 50 compositions for orchestra or band, including six symphonies, concertos for saxophone, accordion and violin, and a requiem mass. During the last decades of his life, as more stringently modernist styles came to be favoured by American composers, the works of Creston suffered a decline – a trend that may now be reversing itself.

Háry János Suite

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

Born in Kecskemét, Hungary, 1882

Died in Budapest, 1967

It seems that there really was a man named Háry János – but that fact abruptly ends and fantasy begins.

Kodály based his popular 1926 Singspiel *Háry János* on a poem by the Hungarian writer János Garay – a verse-setting of extravagant tales told by a veteran of the Napoleonic wars in a village pub. In both poem and Singspiel, the old soldier recounts how he once dragged a house across the Russian-Austrian border, cured the Emperor with a magical potion and single-handedly defeated Napoleon's army, among other remarkable exploits.

In 1927, Kodály extracted his *Háry János Suite* from the score of his stage-work, beginning the suite with a huge orchestral “sneeze.” According to Hungarian superstition, if someone sneezes following the telling of a tale, the tale must be true. (Several more sneezes are heard, at appropriately far-fetched moments.)

The music of the Viennese Musical Clock, which fascinates Háry János as a young boy, gives way to a lyrical love song. Then, “General” Háry single-handedly demolishes the French army, finally confronting Napoleon himself – a tall man, who falls to his knees and begs for mercy. This is followed by an intermezzo – the only musical material in the piece that is directly derived from Hungarian folk material (although the whole work is steeped in this tradition). Finally, the suite concludes with Háry János' triumphal entrance into the court of the Austrian emperor.

Kodály wrote that the character Háry János is “the personification of the Hungarian story-telling imagination. He does not tell lies; he imagines stories, he is a poet. What he tells us may never have happened, but he has experienced it in spirit, so it is more real than reality.”

Kodály's orchestration is characteristically bright, making use of a phalanx of trumpets, a variety of percussion instruments and the distinctive sound of cimbalom – a hammered dulcimer that evokes the spirit of Central Europe.

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Biographies

Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto, **Raffi Armenian** was trained in the European tradition. In Vienna he studied piano, conducting, voice and composition with Bruno Seidlhofer, Hans Swarowsky, Ferdinand Grossmann and Alfred Uhl respectively.

Maestro Armenian has conducted a television version of Menotti's *The Medium* which was nominated for an Emmy Award that season. He received a Juno nomination for a recording of Ravel and Schoenberg with one of Canada's great singers, Maureen Forrester, and the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, which he founded. In 1988, The CCE was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque from the Canadian Music Council for its *Serenades* album, which was subsequently nominated for a Juno Award. Repertoire from the Ensemble's *Music from Berlin in the 1920s* was selected by Woody Allen to underscore his film *Shadows and Fog*.

Sought after as a guest conductor, Mr. Armenian has led the Belgian Radio Orchestra, the Enescu Philharmonic of Bucharest at the Ravenna International Music Festival, the Montreal Symphony, the Winnipeg Symphony, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, l'Orchestre symphonique de Québec, the Edmonton Symphony, the Hamilton Philharmonic and Violon du Roy.

Maestro Armenian held the position of Music Director of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony for 22 years and worked with such illustrious companies as the Canadian Opera Company, Michigan Opera Theater, l'Opéra de Montréal, Opera Columbus and for the famed Indiana University School of Music. Kitchener-Waterloo's acoustically superb "Centre in the Square" has a main theatre named Raffi Armenian Theatre. The design was strongly influenced by Maestro Armenian.

The Armenian legacy is secured by his highly acclaimed performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* in which tenor Jon Vickers made his final appearance in 1989. He recently conducted *La Belle Hélène* at l'Opéra de Québec and Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with Opera Hamilton. Mr. Armenian is a recipient of the Order of Canada and Honorary Doctorates from Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo.

Born in Kamloops, British Columbia, **Devon Fornelli** began studying music at the age of four. After several years of studying the piano, with intermittent percussive pot and pan playing, Devon began studying percussion after his father won a raffle prize that was six months of drum lessons. He subsequently enrolled at the University of British Columbia where his principal instructor was Salvador Ferreras. Presently, Devon is completing his Master's degree in Percussion Performance with Dr. Russell Hartenberger, Beverley Johnston, John Rudolph, and Robin Engelman.

Przemyslaw Raczynski has been a winner of the U of T Concerto Competition, the Mississauga Symphony Solo Competition, and the Canadian Music Competitions (National First Prize-Wind 25). He has appeared as a soloist with the Toronto Sinfonietta, and the Northumberland Orchestra in Coburg, and will appear with the Etobicoke Philharmonic and Mississauga Symphony this year. He gives regular recitals in Toronto, and has performed at the Glenn Gould Studio. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto, studying with Joaquin Valdepenas and is currently a Master of Music student at the University of Southern California, studying with Yehuda Gilad.

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Raffi Armenian, conductor

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Kenneth Peacock was a distinguished alumnus of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music. His body of work, as a composer and researcher for half a century, has made a significant impact on musical life in Canada. The Faculty of Music was very grateful to learn that Mr. Peacock had made a bequest to the University of Toronto in his will for the benefit of our music programs. With this legacy gift, the Faculty of Music will establish the Kenneth H. Peacock Lecture Series in Music in keeping with his lifelong interest in and contribution to the multi-dimensional study of music. Thank you Mr. Peacock.

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